

The Production-Oriented Approach for Digital Textbooks: Reconstructing Vocational EFL Curricula in the AI Era

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Abstract:

This paper addresses Curriculum Reform and Pedagogical Transformation by examining how China's indigenous foreign language education theory, the Production-Oriented Approach (POA), can guide the development and classroom use of digital textbooks to reshape vocational English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) curricula in the AI era. Drawing on Tyler's classic curriculum rationale, the paper first reviews how traditional vocational EFL curricula have been organized through a largely linear alignment among objectives, content, methods, evaluation, and printed textbooks, and why such alignment often constrains authenticity, personalization, and evidence-based improvement. Building on POA's pedagogical logic—output-driven learning, input-enabled facilitation, and assessment-for-improvement—the paper argues that POA-informed digital textbooks can reposition vocational “language-mediated action” at the center of curriculum design. Specifically, they function as curriculum operating systems that integrate (1) structured presentation of knowledge and resources aligned with real workplace tasks, (2) task-based skill development supported by iterative output cycles, (3) affective linkage to sustain motivation and engagement, (4) learning management and traceable evidence for formative evaluation, (5) competency and literacy development through scaffolded learning pathways, and (6) AI-enabled interaction, feedback, and adaptive support grounded in learning theory. The paper concludes that POA, when enacted through digital textbooks, can foster systemic transformation of vocational EFL ecosystems—spanning materials, pedagogy, assessment, and governance—and offers a context-sensitive yet globally relevant reference for foreign/second language curriculum reform in an AI-enhanced educational landscape.

Keywords:

Production Oriented Approach, digital textbooks, Vocational EFL Curricula, AI era.